



Rock Talk

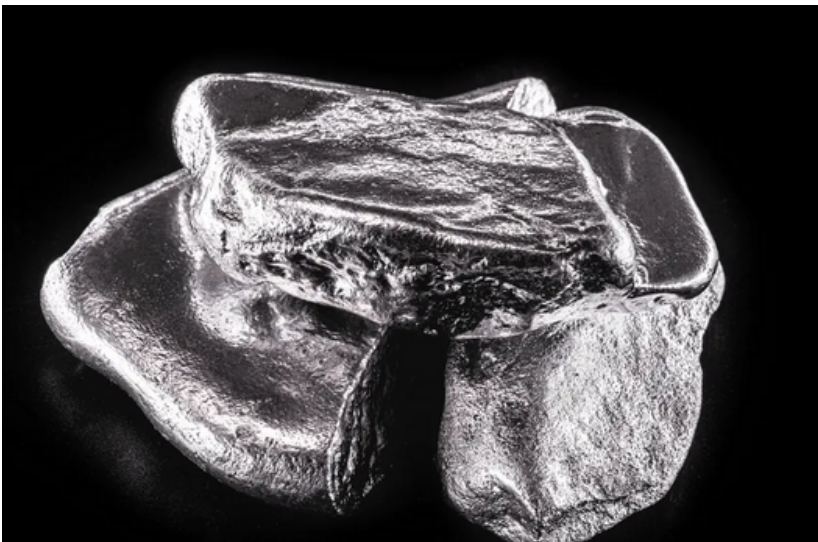
The Official Newsletter of the Withlacoochee Rockhounds

The Rarest And Most Expensive Precious Metal Isn't Gold

This rare precious metal is 10 times more expensive than gold, and you might already own some.

It's commonly believed that gold is one of the rarest and most expensive precious metals – but while it does rank pretty high comparatively, there is one metal that has it beat hands down both for price and rarity.

The monetary worth of different metals is inconsistent, differing slightly depending on demand and access. Due to the versatility of gold, its conductivity, durability, and good looks place it firmly in the top five most expensive metals. Gold prices stand at over \$1,850 per ounce at the time of publication – impressive, but nothing compared to rhodium.



This Month's Roundup of Stories

- [Rarest metal](#)
- [Secretary's Report](#)
- [Rose Quartz vs Pink Quartz](#)
- [Florida Fossils](#)
- [What to Cut](#)
- [RIP - The Viking](#)
- [Bench Tips](#)

Currently the most expensive precious metal and one of the rarest, the price per ounce of rhodium stands at \$10,300 at the time of publication. So, what makes it so expensive? Rhodium doesn't easily react to oxygen, making it a noble metal and meaning it's a perfect catalyst, resistant to both corrosion and oxidation.

As the rarest of the platinum group metals, rhodium occurs at roughly 0.000037 parts per million in the Earth's crust, while gold is found at an abundance of around 0.0013 parts per million, according to the Royal Society of Chemistry. Produced mainly in South Africa and Russia, rhodium can come as a by-product of refining copper and nickel ores, which contain up to 0.1 percent of the precious metal. Around 16 tons of rhodium are produced yearly, with an estimated reserve of 3,000 tons.

Read the entire article at [IFLScience.com](https://www.iflscience.com)

Clubhouse Address:
3357 Susan Dr.
Spring Hill, FL 34606

Secretary's Report

Minutes and More from Club Secretary - Melodye Steverson

Withlacoochee Rockhounds Monthly Meeting Meeting Minutes Date 3-8-23

The meeting was called to order by President Judith Birx at 7:13pm.

We all stood for the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence.

There were 3 new members to recognize: James Roush, Velma Belanger and Haley Smith.

There were no guests in attendance.

Roberta Oldread made a motion to accept the minutes of our February meeting as printed in the newsletter, Lauren Bell seconded. Passed by all members.

President Birx began with announcements;

She reminded members of the AFMS Rock Swap/Sale gathering in Live Oak, Florida this coming weekend and encouraged members to attend if possible.

She then announced that we had received a Thank You letter from the recipient of our club scholarship to the USF Geology Department in Tampa.

President Birx alerted members to be watching out for a questionnaire that would be coming out to them from the Board of Directors asking for feed back and suggestions on programs and the direction of the club.

She explained the criteria for the dispersal of the recently donated rock collection from Mr Joe Mize, and explained that only active, involved, current club members would be receiving a portion of the collection at the end of the meeting.

Vice President Janice Wojcik announced that she and fellow teacher Pam Gonzalez would be facilitating a Silversmith Class in May. Date and time TBA. She went on to say that the April meeting program, "Florida Fossils", will be presented by Board member Leslie Newberry. Leslie will bring specimens, a slide show, sand to look through for fossils and more surprises! She encouraged all members to attend.

Member Lauren Bell announced that "Prehistoric Con" will be held April 22nd in Mulberry, Florida. There will be an inflatable dinosaur costume race, Teapot racing and more! Lauren will be there selling her jewelry.

Ralph Barber made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Lauren Bell seconded, passed by all.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:39pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Secretary Melodye Steverson.

Withlacoochee Rockhounds Board of Directors Meeting Minutes Date 3-22-23

Attending Board members; Judith Birx, Janice Wocjik, Melodye Steverson, Janet Wheeler, Ralph Barber, Roger Wheeler, Michael Steverson and Leslie Newberry. Board meeting started at 6:47pm and was held via the Internet on Zoom.

President Birx began by explaining her problems with the IRS and our reinstatement to 501(c)3. She showed us twenty-five pages of forms she needed to fill out. The IRS is charging us \$600 for reinstatement.

Treasurer Wheeler added "The last time we filed, I sent it certified and I got the receipt saying they had received it and signed for it, but they claimed they never got it."

After extensive discussion, it was decided we needed to find a CPA or lawyer to handle this because the IRS won't even talk to us regarding this problem.

Board Member Michael Steverson researched and came up with a CPA in our area that deals with non-profits. President Birx said she would call this office to make an appointment. This discussion is tabled until the next meeting.

Continued on page 7



Rose Quartz vs. Pink Quartz

May the Quartz Be With You!

Rose quartz ranks high among the most attractive and familiar of the many color varieties of quartz. Its delicate pink color, soft translucency, and affordability make it a popular gemstone.

Pink quartz is a much lesser-known variety of quartz. While similar to rose quartz in color, it differs markedly in structure, degree of transparency, origin of color, occurrence, rarity, and cost.

Rose quartz always occurs in massive form without crystal faces or terminations. Translucent and with uniform color distribution, it is found mainly in the core zones of granite pegmatites.

Mineralogists had traditionally attributed the color of rose quartz to traces of titanium and, to a lesser extent, iron and manganese. These impurities were thought to distort the crystal lattice, causing it to reflect and transmit red wavelengths of light which the human eye perceives as varying shades of pink.

Pink quartz, a pink macrocrystalline variety of quartz, was discovered in pegmatites at Rumford, Maine, and first described in mineralogical journals in 1938. But these specimens attracted little attention from mineralogists or collectors at the time, initially, they were assumed to be a rare, atypical subvariety of rose quartz.

Then in 1959, pegmatite miners in Brazil's gemstone-rich Minas Gerais state discovered clusters of beautifully developed, terminated, hexagonal quartz prisms. These crystals had water-clear transparency and a pink color that was similar, but not identical to, the color of rose quartz.

When these specimens appeared on the collector markets of Europe and the United States, the limited supply was snapped up by both collectors and mineralogists.

Mineralogists soon learned that the color of pink quartz, unlike that of rose quartz, is created when some silicon ions within the quartz crystal lattice are replaced by trivalent aluminum ions and pentavalent phosphorus ions. This partial replacement renders the lattice susceptible to distortion from the energy of natural geophysical radiation, creating color centers that form when radiation displaces phosphorus ions from their normal lattice positions, leaving voids that trap electrons.

When white light boosts these trapped electrons to higher energy levels, they return to their normal levels by releasing excess energy as visible light that we perceive as pink or pale red.

Read the entire article at RockNGem.com





PLEISTOCENE FLORIDA FOSSILS

The next meeting of the Withlacoochee Rockhounds, Wednesday, April 12 will be a hands-on/slide show presentation by Board Member, Leslie Newberry....an overview of the animals of Pleistocene Florida. Members in attendance will receive a bag of fossils with an ID sheet and a bag of Venice gravel with instructions on how to look for sharks teeth.

Learn how Mastodons and mammoths wandered in Florida along with giant camels, huge armadillos and our very own giant 14 foot tall ground sloth.



What to Cut: California Gold

California, here I come!

California gold doesn't always come in nuggets. It can also be found embedded in quartz and used as a lapidary material.

California has always had a deep history in gold, ever since the 1840s gold rush, where thousands came from all over the world to try and capture their fortune in gold. Though you might not hear about the gold rush in California much anymore, it hasn't stopped. New claims are being filed each year, and many tourists still come to try their hand at panning gold to get the real experience.

Recently, Shannon Poe from the American Mining Rights Association (AMRA), and his partners have been digging in the Screamer Mine near Angels Camp, California. Much of the gold there is embedded in large quartz specimens and it cannot be seen by the naked eye. They have uncovered quite a bit by using metal detectors and then bringing the material back to their shop and slabbing the rocks to see the gold veins run through the center of the quartz. The gold can then be run through the extraction process, or it can be utilized as lapidary-grade material. The slabs containing gold veins can be performed to design cabochons.

Although quartz isn't very complex to work with, adding gold to the mix changes a few things in your setup. To start, quartz and most California materials are generally fractured and can easily fall apart at any time during the lapidary process. Stabilizing the material first is beneficial to ensure getting the most material to work with, without losing any from it falling apart either on the saw or when starting to grind performs.

Next, when cutting the quartz down, use the thinnest blade possible so that you waste very little of the gold content. At this point, you want to inspect all your slabs to ensure the stabilization process effectively filled any fissures in your material and that it will be solid enough to proceed to cab it. If there are open cracks, send it back for a second stabilizing treatment. At this point, be ready to trim out the cabochon preforms.

Read the entire article and RockNGem.com



The Fukang Meteorite – A Beautiful Rock That's Out Of This World

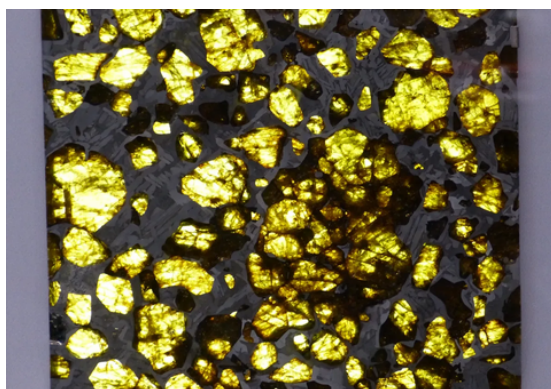
A rare (and expensive) meteorite that was formed by our early Solar System.

The Fukang meteorite belongs to a rare class of meteorites known as pallasites (which used to be called lithosiderites). They are characterized by networks of nickel-iron metal in which are set crystals of the silicate mineral olivine. When cut and polished, pallasites show off this impressive arrangement of translucent crystals that tend to be green in color, but they sometimes have distinct yellow, brown, or gold hues that result from weathering while on Earth.

These meteorites were originally named by Peter Simon Pallas, a German doctor and naturalist, who was the first to describe the Krasnojarsk pallasite in 1772. This strange mass of iron had been found by a blacksmith in Siberia earlier that century and was taken to St Petersburg for analysis.

Due to their striking and unusual appearance, pallasites are regarded as one of the first recognized and accepted extraterrestrial materials. They provide a unique and important glimpse into the deep interior of our Solar System, as they were formed some 4.5 billion years ago. The rocks are thought to have formed in differentiated asteroids (asteroids that have separated into two parts – a core and mantle – due to alterations caused by thermal processes).

Read the entire article at IFLSite.com



Field Trips

"Note: The Withlacoochee Rockhounds Club does not sponsor field trips other than trips that are sanctioned by the SFMS (The Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies).

Our club insurance is through SFMS and does not cover excursions not listed on their website as safe."

Robert Jensen 9/2/1934 - 3/13/2023

Lovingly called “The Viking” by all who knew him, Bob was a genuine force of nature. He was a giant of a man in both stature and heart. In his lifetime, he was an inventor (Tiny Tears & Betsy Wetsy dolls, and artificial joint replacements, among others), a nuclear engineer, a pilot, a maker, an artist, a teacher, a loving husband and father, and so much more. I was privileged to have him as my mentor and my friend for 19 years. He taught me about silver, copper, stones & design and I learned life lessons along the way. He was forever making me laugh but he was a tough teacher and I never got away with doing any less than my best. That was the most important lesson of all.

Bob was also one of the earliest members of the Withlacoochee Rockhounds club and helped form our club into what it is today. When anyone had a question about anything, you'd hear the familiar phrase, “Ask The Viking!” He was always ready to help, to teach, to explain and wouldn't stop until you understood what you needed to know. He created tools and gadgets for making tasks easier and many of those creations were provided to our club for members to use in rock cutting or silver smithing. Most of those tools have long since worn out or disappeared from the club's collection, but some of our older members will remember them fondly. Bob always helped teach our club's silver smithing classes and he made the students really work at learning techniques properly. He insisted they learn to “work smarter, not harder”.

Bob was responsible for my joining our club and becoming involved in the managing and direction of the organization. Maybe he thought I could help to continue his legacy. After his health forced him to stop attending meetings, every time I talked to him he would ask how the club was doing and was pleased to hear about the programs and the members. Even though he lost most of his sight in recent years, I often took my new work over for him to “see”. He would feel the pieces and tell me what he thought about them and say how proud he was of how far I had come.

I feel truly blessed to have had him in my life and I will miss him greatly.

Melodye Steverson
Club Secretary

Continued from page 2

President Birx requested Secretary Steverson to create a survey sheet for club members to fill out, informing the Board of what they would like to see, learn, and experience in the club. This will be sent out by e-mail to club members, however there will be some of the surveys available to fill out at monthly meetings.

President Birx announced that the club needs to have four Pixie machines working at any time and after discussion, Vice President Wojcik made a motion for the club to purchase one new Pixie and a Pixie motor to fix one that is currently not running. Janet Wheeler seconded, motion passed.

Webmaster Michael Steverson asked for \$13 per month for MailChimp, to be able to send out up to 5,000 emails per month. Vice President Wojcik made a motion to pay \$13 per month for MailChimp, seconded by Janet Wheeler. Passed.

President Birx brought up our endowment fund to USF and asked for suggestions for an amount to send. Ralph Barber made a motion to send \$250 to USF, seconded by VP Wojcik. Passed. The Thank You letter that we got from this year's scholarship recipient will be put in the newsletter for all of the club members to realize what our club is doing for education.

VP Wojcik announced that she and Pam Gonzalez will be teaching a silversmith class either May 6th or May 20th from 10 am – 5 pm. She stated that from now on the classes need to be paid for in advance, preferably at sign-up with no refunds available except for approved emergencies. Cancellations will be accepted a minimum of 48 hours before the class begins. There will be a wait-list for the class and empty spots will be filled in order of sign-up.

Board Member Leslie Newberry will be presenting the April program on Florida fossils. The May program will be a video, title will be announced when decided.

The meeting ended at 7:54 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Secretary Melodye Steverson

APRIL 22ND, 2023
10AM - 6PM
 MULBERRY, FL

PREHISTORICON

FREE EVENT

Please join us for a fun family event of food trucks, special guests, Indiana Jones lookalike contest, steampunk, tea dueling, cane dueling, and more.

THE GEM THEATER
will present

INDIANA JONES
RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK

bartowcon.com ■ bartowcon1701@gmail.com

Withlacoochee Rockhounds

Our monthly club meeting is held at the Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens Club, 3357 Susan Dr., Spring Hill, FL 34606, on the 2nd Wednesday of each month from 7:00 to 9:00 PM

www.withlacoocheerockhounds.com

Your Business Card Size Ad in Rock Talk

The cost for non-club members to advertise their businesses in Rock Talk is \$10.00 per month. Contact Michael Steverson to set up an ad in both the newsletter and the club website. It will benefit both your business and our club.

Advertisers Needed

Please help us find advertisers for the Rock Talk and our website. The club can use the monthly income. Both the Rock Talk and our website have more exposure than only club members

Contact club treasure Janet Wheeler: ceegirl@tampabay.rr.com or send to:
 Withlacoochee Rockhounds
 PO Box 9634
 Spring Hill, FL 34811-6634

Withlacoochee Rockhounds

Purpose

We are a non-profit organization whose purpose is to foster interest and promote knowledge of minerals, gems, fossils, lapidary arts, and earth sciences, through regular meetings, informative programs, workshops, and field trips. PLUS, our annual gem, mineral and jewelry show.

Membership is open to anyone sharing such interests.

Dues

Dues are \$35.00 annually for adults, and \$5.00 for children under 18 years of age.

Club Meeting Location and time

Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens Center, 3357 Susan Dr in Spring Hill. The meetings are held the second Wednesday of the month at 7:00PM

2023 Club Officers and Appointees

President	Judith Birx	352.587.1702	judithbirx@hotmail.com
Vice President	Janice Wojcik	813.677.6263	jfwojcik@verizon.net
Secretary	Melodye Steverson	352.683.9496	melodye@designsbymelodye.com
Treasurer	Janet Wheeler	727.938.3644	ceegirl@tampabay.rr.com
Rock Talk Editor	Michael Steverson	407.376.5570	highlander56@gmail.com
Club Webmaster	Michael Steverson	407.376.5570	highlander56@gmail.com
Mailing Reporter	Janet Wheeler	727.938.3644	ceegirl@tampabay.rr.com
Gem Bag Coordinator	Gloria DuPont	352.848.5199	ddupont@tampabay.rr.com
Audio/Visual Coordinator	Michael Steverson	407.376.5570	highlander56@gmail.com

Board of Directors

Judith Birx (President)	Janice Wojcik (Vice President)	Melodye Steverson (Secretary)	Janet Wheeler (Treasurer)
Roberta Oldread	Leslie Newberry	Roger Wheeler	Michael Steverson
			Ralph Barber (Past President)

What Are Lucky Stones?

May luck be with you!

Different types of stones are believed to bring luck in different areas of life. Perhaps you are seeking good luck in a financial venture. Maybe you're planning a trip and want good luck with safe travel. Perhaps you're starting a new relationship and you want to be lucky in love.

Or maybe you've been lucky in love and now you want to start a family.

The type of luck you seek will dictate the stone best suited to assist you.

There may also be times when using more than one type of stone will be beneficial and increase your chances.

First, let's look at five stones believed to bring good luck.

Then we'll look at a few ways to use more than one type of rock so you can dial in the luck you seek.

1. Amazonite

Some refer to amazonite as the "gambler's stone" because of a belief in the stone's ability to bring good luck in games of chance or when starting a new venture.

2. Citrine

Known as a stone of abundance, manifestation, and good luck, citrine is believed to promote good fortune and prosperity. When used as an aid in manifesting your desires, it can help with your creativity, love life, vitality, or fertility.

3. Jade

In addition to attracting abundance and prosperity, jade is believed by some to help strengthen your health and increase longevity. Many view jade as one of the most powerful of all the good luck stones.

4. Tiger's Eye

This stone is reputed to bring good luck in matters of wealth and money. Tiger's eye is also viewed as a stone of protection.

5. Peridot

Many believe peridot will attract financial well-being and refer to it as the "money stone."

Many other stones such as rose quartz, garnet, and labradorite are also believed to bring good luck. Which rock is best for you? Like many questions related to metaphysics, there isn't a single correct answer. The best approach is to combine what you know about the qualities of a stone with your intuition and proceed from there.

Read the entire article at RockNGem.com





Bench Tips from Brad Smith

Brad Smith's *Bench Tips* are a monthly feature of Rock Talk

LAYOUT TOOLS

Dimensions on some features of a design can be fluid while others must be accurate for the design to work. When precision on a piece is important, good layout techniques are essential.

These are the tools that I rely upon to get holes in the right place, to achieve correct angles, and to cut pieces the correct length.

I like crisp sharp lines to follow, so I often coat surfaces with a dark marker and scribe my layout lines onto the metal. A square makes quick work of checking right angles or marking where to cut, and the thin center punch helps me mark a place to drill holes exactly where I want them.

Finally, a good set of dividers is probably my favorite layout tool. They let me quickly mark a strip for cutting, swing an arc, and divide a line or curve into as many equal segments as I need. I keep at least one set of dividers in every toolbox.

INVENTORY RECORD

In an ideal world each of us who sells their jewelry has a good record with photos of all pieces in our inventory. We use it for insurance purposes, to record the cost to produce, to note where the item was sent out on consignment, and maybe to store descriptive text for marketing. Eventually, we note in the record when the piece was sold and for how much.

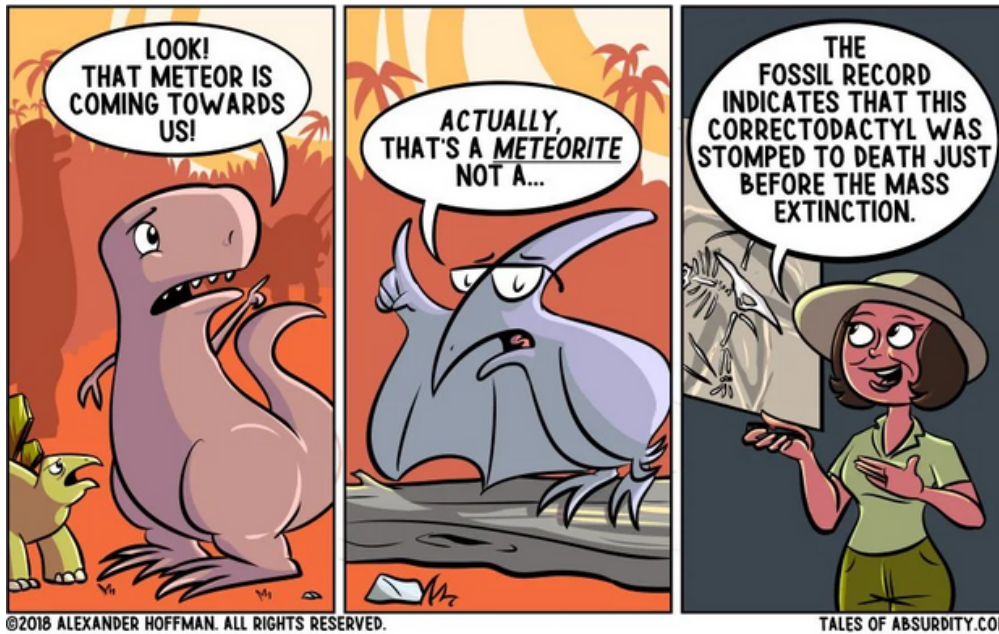
It's nice to also have good pictures of each piece, but sometimes we don't have time for a full-on photo session. In situations like this it's worth doing a quick group shot with the help of a phone, a camera, a scanner, or even a color copier. The quality is at least sufficient for an accurate identification in case a piece is lost.

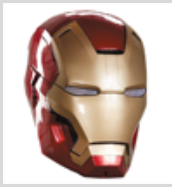


Learn New Skills with Brad's "How To Do It" Books

[Amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith](https://www.amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith)

Rock Talk Funny Papers





From The Editor

Hello to all Withlacoochee Rockhounds

It is I, your friendly neighborhood editor again.

If you missed our March 2023 meeting, you missed The Rock Rummage Sale! Our members wheeled and dealt on all sorts of rock-related items.

We also had distribution of the collection that had been donated to the club by Joe Mize.

Do NOT miss this month's meeting. It's Pleistocene Florida Fossils ! Board member Leslie Newberry will be doing a presentation of the animals of Pleistocene Florida. You will receive a bag of fossils, plus a bag of Venice gravel with instructions on how to look for sharks teeth. We will also have a sign-up sheet for the upcoming Silversmithing class. If you wish to attend the class, please add your name to the sheet, and have your \$25 class fee with you. We can do checks, cash, or credit cards.

All of you should have received an e-mail regarding membership renewal. We are now into 2023, and your dues for the new year are due. You can pay them at the meeting. You can mail them into the address on the membership form. Or as an added convenience this year, your membership renewal e-mail has a link where you can pay for your membership via credit card. No muss, no fuss. Any member who has not paid their 2023 dues is not considered a member at this time. It is imperative that your membership dues are paid. They help us pay for club functions, and more!

If you would like to place a business card ad in the newsletter, please feel free to contact me, and we'll get you added to the next available issue.

Additionally, if any of you have not received your newsletter or are not receiving my e-mail blasts (meetings, rock sales, etc.), *please* check your spam folder. If you are still are not receiving them, please contact me, and let's make sure I have your correct e-mail address. I have a few of you who unsubscribed from the mailings. I cannot add you back to the list. You have to subscribe to get back on the list. It's a permissions thing.

Our Board would like our members to come up with suggestions for programs to be presented at our monthly meetings. What would you like to see? What would you like to learn? What would you like to know? Is there something you'd like to teach or present? You can help our club expand its educational repertoire. We'd love to hear from you all.

Contact any Board member or bring your written suggestions to a meeting.

Rock On!!!

Club Phone Number - 352.587.2714

Warning to Withlacoochee Rockhound Members

During the last several months, illicit requests have been sent to members of various clubs in the US, including the Withlacoochee Rockhounds, asking members to purchase gift cards that would be used as donations to various organizations.

These are SCAMS.

Be advised that our club has never and will never ask members to buy gift cards or provide any form of monetary funds to anyone or any organization by phone call, email, or any other method of communication.

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Your Business Card Size Ad in Rock Talk

The cost for non-club members to advertise their businesses in
Rock Talk is \$10.00 per month.

Contact Michael Stevenson to set up an ad in both the newsletter and
the club website. It will benefit both
your business and our club.

If you ad has a web address, or Etsy shop address, I have linked to it.

Advertisers Are Needed

Please help us find advertisers for the Rock Talk and our website.

The monthly income from these ads is beneficial to the club.

Both the Rock Talk and our website have more exposure than only club members.

Contact club treasurer Janet Wheeler: ceecgirl@tampabay.rr.com or

send to:

Withlacoochee Rockhounds

PO Box 5634 Spring Hill, FL 34611-5634

Withlacoochee Rockhounds

Membership Form

2023

Annual Dues: Individual member, \$35.00. Under 18 years of age, \$5.00

Check if returning member

Check if current member
with change of information

Check if new member

Check if under 18

Please Print Clearly

Last name

First Name

Street Address:

City

State

ZIP

Phone Number (s)

Email address:

You may now fill in the fields on this form if you are viewing it on your computer or tablet.
Each field may be clicked on and then you may type in your information.
You will still need to print out the form, but your added information should show on the form.

Give this completed form along with your check for dues made out to "Withlacoochee Rockhounds" to club secretary Janet Wheeler at a club meeting. Or mail the form and your check to:

Withlacoochee Rockhounds
PO Box 5634
Spring Hill, FL 34611-5634

2022